Relationship between Academic Stress and Binge Eating Among Students Preparing for Competitive Exams

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Abstract: The current study seeks to ascertain the relationship between academic stress and binge eating among students preparing for competitive exams. Students preparing for competitive exams were divided into three groups: first-attempters, second-attempters/dropouts, and alternate career pursuers along with preparing for competitive exams. Participants included N=187 students studying in schools and colleges of Gurgaon, Haryana. The Stress Scale developed by Vijaya Lakshmi and Shruti Narain (SS-LVNS) was used to assess the participants' academic stress levels. The Binge Eating Scale, developed by J. Gormally et al. in 1982, was used to assess the participants' levels of obesity. Data was analyzed using IBM SPSS, Version-28. Participants with low stress levels made up 3.74%, while those with high stress levels made up 40.6%. Participants with severe binge eating levels made up 33.68% of the total, while non-bingeing levels made up 31.01%.The findings revealed that there is a link between academic stress and binge eating. The greater one's academic stress, the greater one's binge-eating levels. The findings also revealed that 2nd attempters/drop-outs have high levels of academic stress as compared to other two groups.

Key terms: Academic stress, Binge eating, Binge eating scale, Competitive exams, Stress scale.

Introduction:
In a world full of competition, stress levels among the youngsters are getting higher day by day. The soaring cutoffs of subjects such as medical, engineering, chartered accountancy and many more have increased the competition among students. The expectations raised by adults and teachers have raised the bar high for students every year. Due to this reason, many students develop high levels of stress during the exam season.

Academic Stress:
The term "stress" can be outlined as a pattern of reactions made by an individual in response to stimuli that increases the state of equilibrium and is beyond one's actual ability to cope up with. Stress can also be defined as the body's general response so as to maintain homeostasis or equilibrium. The term stress was devised by Hans Selye in 1936. Stress can be highlighted as a non-specific reaction of an individual's body due to presence and interaction with different external stimuli present in the environment (Selye, 1936). The term stress can also be defined as physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioral responses of an individual in response to events or conditions that are perceived as threatening (Ciccarelli & White, 2017). There are 2 types of stress: Eustress- which is good for an individual and is responsible for peak performance and managing minor crises. Distress is a negative type of stress which causes our body wear and tear.

High levels of distress pose a challenge to the natural homeostasis or a sense of equilibrium of an individual. The organism in turn produces a physiological response so as to maintain a state of balance that is lost due to stress. Academic stress is defined as a form of mental distress about perceived academic difficulties or fear of academic failure and constantly worrying about such possibility. Academic stress if defined as a demand related to academics that exceeds the available resources as cognitively appeared by the taught involved (Bisht, 1989). Many researches have proved that more than half of the students who are preparing for competitive exams experience fear of failure.

There could be many sources of academic stress such as inadequate concept clarity, lack of time to prepare, work overload, learner-taught relationship conflict or poor and unhealthy eating habits (Pozos-Radillo et al., 2014; Zurlo et al., 2020). Academic stress is also highly associated with depression, anxiety, low well-being, low academic achievements and insomnia ((Baste and Gadkari, 2014; Brown et al.,2016; Capone et al., 2020; Hudd et al., 2000; Rania et al.,2014; Sohail, 2013).

In the current study Stress scale developed by Vijaya Lakshmi and Shruti Narain (SS-LVNS) consists of 4 dimensions:
1. Pressure- enforcing certain demands or expectations in order to behave in certain ways.
2. Physical stress- stress which leads to wear and tear of the body in the form of headache, muscular tension, elevated heart rate, etc.
3. Anxiety- unpleasant state of mind with physiological arousal and is accompanied by feelings of guilt, apprehension, worry and agitation.
4. Frustration- emotional response accompanied by anger and disappointment as a result of blocking of needs, goals or desired path by some external force.

Binge Eating:

Binge eating is defined as a phenomenon where an individual had frequent urge to eat something even when he/she is uncomfortably full. Binge eating is defined as recurrent urge of an individual to eat large amounts of food leading to loss of control over eating patterns (APA, 2013).

Binge eating disorder (BED) is defined as a condition which includes persistent urge to eat food in unlimited amounts accompanied by frequent episodes of out of control eating. BES tends to affect 2% of the population. BED is often defined as a dimensional construct that occurs across sub-clinical and clinical levels (Azarbad, Corsica, Hall, & Hood, 2010; Grilo, 2002; Grucza et al., 2007; Spitzer et al., 1992). In the words of DSM-5, BED is defined as eating larger quantities of food than normal within specified time. While eating, an individual experiences loss of control over eating accompanied by negative emotions during or after its occurrence (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

BED is accompanied by an uncontrollable, excessive and compulsive urge to eat large amounts of highly palatable food so as to vent out feelings of anxiety, guilt or disgust. Often, BED is triggered and maintained as a result of a combination of high levels of prolonged stress and dieting.

Many studies have shown that prolonged academic, physical or emotional stress is associated with the development of binge eating disorder. Stress can cause an increase in desire to eat. Stress increases heart rate and sweating which leads to unhealthy eating habits. Research has shown that nearly 1 in 4 people who have BED experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). During stressful situations, the human body secrets a hormone cortisol which increases hunger drive thereby inducing binge eating. Binge eating is also considered as "stress-eating."

Objectives of the Study:
1. To find if high levels of academic stress induces binge eating patterns among the students preparing for competitive exams.
2. To check if there exists significant differences among the stress levels of 1st attempters, 2nd attempters and those students who pursued alternate careers along with preparing for competitive exams.
3. To find out if binge eating is the most favorable response towards stress.
4. To tell the ways in order to deal with academic stress.

Rationale of the Study:
1. To know the probable responses for academic stress.
2. To increase awareness among students to give priority to their health rather than exams.
3. To suggest interventions in the fields of health psychology and educational psychology so as to ease out the admission process.

Literature Review:

Virginia L. Shelton & Karena T. Valkyrie (2010) conducted a study in Troy University, Alabama to find the association between stress and eating disorders on 362 college students revealed that there is a high association between stress and body dissatisfaction, bulimic symptoms and drive for thinness. 53% of the students had depression and 4% of them feel sad all the time. 12 % of them experienced suicidal thoughts, 21% of them have less appetite and 23% experienced increase in appetite. This study was conducted in Alabama. The present study is conducted in India. Also, the present study highlights how increased academic stress leads to binge eating among students preparing for competitive exams. This study only highlights Binge eating among college students due to stress.

Su Wei Ngan et al. (2017) conducted a study in Malaysia to check the relationship between eating disorders and stress among medical students revealed that 75.7% of medical students have high levels of stress which shows a risky trend towards eating disorders. EAT-26 was used along with Cohen Perceived stress scale to collect data from 320 respondents. The present study is conducted in India and it aims to check the relationship between academic stress and binge eating. Stress scale by Vijaya Lakshmi and Shruti Narain is used to measure stress and binge eating scale is used to determine binge eating habits. Also, this study is conducted only on students who are preparing for competitive exams.

Tariq A. Alalwan et al. (2018) conducted a study on 169 undergraduate Students of University of Bahrain in Bahrain to check the effect of emotions on eating behaviors revealed that gender and marital status had no effect on eating behaviors. 45.6% of the students had experienced loneliness therefore they increased their food intake to 32%. Results also revealed that 71.6% of students who experienced boredom triggering emotional eating but didn't experienced feelings of guilt. The present study is conducted in India to check the relationship between high academic stress and binge eating. The present study also reveals the eating patterns of students preparing for competitive exams.

Jenna K. Anderson (2019) conducted a study in University of Northern Iowa to check the relationship between disordered eating, stress and anxiety revealed that there is high correlation among these three. This study was only conducted on first year students who are women and the sample size selected was 99. DASS-21, EDE-Q and demographic questionnaire was used to collect data. The present research is conducted in India with a sample size of around 187. The study is conducted to check how high academic

stress induced binge eating. This study is only being conducted on students who are preparing for competitive exams on both genders.

Manal M. Badrasawi& Souzan J. Zidan (2019) conducted a study in Palestine Polytechnic University to measure the prevalence of binge eating symptoms and its relationship with socio-demographic status, nutritional status and dietary habits revealed that 50% of the participants in the study have binge eating symptoms. Also binge eating has high correlation with psychosocial factors. The study was conducted in Palestine on 144 undergraduate female students. The data was collected using Binge Eating Disorder Screener-7 (BEDS-7) and Arabic version of Depression Anxiety Stress. The present study is conducted in India on 187 participants, both males and females and belonging to age groups of 17-21. The present study aims to determine if there is high correlation between academic stress and binge eating among students preparing for competitive exams. Data collection was done by using Binge Eating Scale and Stress Scale.

Katina Letrice Clarke (2019) conducted a study in Walden University, Minnesota aimed to assess the multivariate relationship of binge drinking, eating, watching with depression, anxiety and stress. The study was conducted on 102 college students in the age group of 18-24. The multivariate canonical results revealed that low scores on binge eating and drinking positively correlated with low anxiety levels but high scores on binge watching. Participants who scored low on stress levels and high anxiety tend to have low scores on binge eating and binge watching. The present study is conducted in India with a sample size of 187 participants in the age group of 17-21. The study aims to check the correlation between academic stress and binge eating among students preparing for competitive exams.

Daniela Caso et al. (2020) conducted a study on the university students of France and Italy to determine the relationship between stress and unhealthy eating considering the moderate effects of BMI, eating style and nationality revealed that academic stress increased binge eating among Italian students whereas there was negative correlation between academic stress and binge eating among French students. This study was conducted on 748 Italian and French Students in the age group of 19-30. The scales that were used in the study are Perception of Academic Stress Scale and Salzburg's Emotional Eating Scale. The results reported that students have above- average academic stress. The present study is conducted in India to check the relationship between academic stress and binge eating among students preparing for competitive exams. The present study also finds binge eating is the one of the most favorable responses towards academic stress. This study has been conducted on school and college students between the age group of 17-21. Data was collected in this study using BES and SS-LVNS.

Michele C. Lim et al. (2021) conducted a study on 324 adolescents to investigate the relationship between high levels of anxiety and stress with increased levels of binge eating revealed that the impact of high levels of stress with anxiety leads to uncontrollable eating among adolescents. Data was collected through Three-Factor Eating Questionnaire- R18, Revised Children Anxiety and Depression Scale, and Child and Adolescent Survey of Experiences. The results of the study revealed that interaction between anxiety and stress was a strong negative predictor of cognitive restraint. The present study is conducted in India to determine the positive correlation between high levels of academic stress and binge eating. The present study also shows that drop outs have high levels of academic stress as compared to 1st attempts of competitive exams and those who have pursued graduation along with preparing for competitive exams as an alternative career option. Binge eating tendencies were measured through Binge Eating Scale and Academic Stress levels were measured through Stress Scale.

Jeremy E. Solly et al. (2021) conducted a study in England on 10,000 college students to check the high prevalence and strong link of binge eating with obsessive and compulsive traits. The aim of the study was to check the associations of BED with comorbidities and measures of impulsivity and compulsivity among college students. An internet-based survey was conducted and about 3415 of the students filled it. The results revealed that 83% of them have BED. It was also revealed that BED was associated with alcohol consumption, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, PTSD, ADHD along with traits of compulsivity and impulsivity. The present study is conducted in India on a sample of 187 participants. The current study aims to check the relationship between academic stress and binge eating among students preparing for competitive exams. BES and Stress Scale are used to collect data from samples.

Methodology:
Sample:
Sample size in the current study consisted of 187 participants belonging to the age group of 17-21. Data was collected from both male and female students who are preparing for competitive exams in Gurgaon. Snowball sampling was used under non-probability sampling technique to collect data from respondents.

Research Design:
Cross-sectional research design was used in the current study. First, correlation between academic stress and binge eating is computed. Then comparison is made among 1st attempters, drop outs/2nd attempters and those who pursued alternate careers along with preparing for competitive exams. on the basis of academic stress levels. Independent variable in the study is academic stress and the dependent variable in the study is binge eating.

Hypothesis:

H_{01}=There exists a no significant relationship between academic stress and binge-eating levels of students preparing for competitive exams.

H_{02}=Stress levels of 1st attempters and 2nd attempters shall not be significantly different.

H_{03}=Significant differences shall not be found in the stress level of the students who are pursuing alternate careers along with preparing for competitive exams and 1st attempters.

H_{04}=Significant differences shall not be found in the stress level of the students who are pursuing alternate careers along with preparing for competitive exams and 2nd attempters/ drop-outs.

H_{05}=Binge eating shall not be one of the most favorable responses among participants of all groups.

Data Collection Tools:

1. **Stress Scale (SS-LVNS)-** Academic Stress Levels of the population were measured using Stress Scale developed by Dr. Vijaya Laxmi and Dr. Shruti Narain in 2014. The scale has 40 questions in it that tends to measure 4 dimensions, that is, pressure, physical stress, anxiety and frustration. Thus, the scale is multidimensional in nature. The subject has to respond either "yes"or "no"on the items. A score of +1 and 0 was given. The answers of those statements that tallied with the answers given in the scoring key were given a score of +1. If they didn't tally, they were given a score of 0. The scale can be administered on both males and females in the age group of 12-24 years. The test is self-administering and it could be either administered in a group or individually. There is no time limit and generally it took 10-15 minutes to fill it by subject.

   Test-retest reliability was computed which came out to be 0.82 which was significant at 0.01 level of confidence. The scale was validated against two other scales-
   - Singh's Personal Stress source Inventory and validity coefficient came out to be 0.72.
   - Stress Dimension of Anxiety, Depression and Stress Scale by Bhatnagar et.al and validity coefficient came out to be 0.83.

2. **Binge Eating Scale (BES)-** Binge Eating Tendencies in the sample were measured by using 16 item Binge Eating Scale (BES). The questionnaire was developed by J. Gormally et.al in 1982. BES is used to test binge eating tendencies that may be an indicator of an eating disorder. It is a self-report measure that identifies compulsive eating patterns. It is one of the most outstanding screening measures among clinical and non-clinical populations. It is a self-administering questionnaire based on two-factor structure and divides the items into behavioral and cognitive Binge eating. Later it is converted into one factor structure and is uni-dimensional in nature. The scale has good reliability, test-retest validity and convergent validity. The age limit of BES is 18-67 years.

Each item in BES consists of 3-4 separate responses each assigned a numerical value. Those who scored less than 17 belong to the category of non-bingeing, those who scored between 18-26 belong to the category of moderate binge eaters and those who scored more than 27 belong to the category of severe binge eaters.

Procedure:

It is important to take the informed consent of the participants before data collection. Participants were asked to fill both SS-LVNS and BES one by one. All the instructions were provided before-hand. Data was collected between 5th March, 2022 and 20th April, 2022.

Inclusion criteria was determined and participants who took part in the study were in the age group of 17-21 who were students of schools and colleges in Gurgaon preparing for various competitive exams such as NEET, JEE, CAT, SAT, CA, etc. Participants who are not taking any competitive exams or having any mental illness were excluded from the study on the basis of exclusion criteria.

Data Analysis:

Data was analyzed with the help of IBM SPSS, Version 28. With the help of Pearson correlation, correlation between stress using ordinal scale and binge eating levels using interval-ratio scale was computed. Significant testing was done under inferential statistics using paired t-test to compute the t-values of stress and binge eating. Descriptive statistics was used to show the comparison between the scores of 1st attempters, 2nd attempters/drop outs and students pursuing alternate careers along with preparing for exams and to show if binge eating is the most favorable response among subjects through pie-chart.

Result:

Table 1.1

Stress levels	Total number of participants	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	Standard deviation	Percentage of participants responded
Severe stress levels	76	38	22	25.394	2.718	40.64%
Low stress levels	7	13	1	7.142	4.059	3.74%

Table 1.1 shows that out of 187 participants, 76(40.64%) of them have severe stress levels whereas 7(3.74%) of them have low stress levels. The mean and standard deviation for participants with severe stress levels is 25.394 and 2.718, respectively whereas the mean and standard deviation for participants with low stress levels is 7.142 and 4.059, respectively.

Table 1.2

Binging levels	Total number of participants	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	Standard deviation	Percentage of participants responded
Severe binging	63	37	27	30.888	2.823	33.68%
Non-binging	58	17	0	10.206	4.956	31.01%

Table 1.2 depicts that out of 187 participants, 63(33.68%) of them have severe binge eating levels whereas remaining 58(31.01%) of them have non-bingeing levels. The mean and standard deviation for participants with severe binging levels came out to be 30.888 and 2.832, respectively. The mean and standard deviation for participants with non-bingeing levels came out to be 10.206 and 4.956, respectively.

Table 1.3

Attempt History	N	Percentage	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	Standard Deviation
1st Attempters	27	35.52%	27	22	24.29	1.54
2nd Attempters	31	40.78%	30	22	25.96	1.95
Students pursuing alternative careers competitive exams	18	23.68%	38	22	26.27	4.29

**Table 1.3** depicts the difference between the stress levels of 1st attempters, 2nd attempters/ drop-outs and students pursuing alternative careers along with preparing for competitive exams as an alternative career option. The mean and standard deviation of 1st attempters (N=27, Percentage=35.52%) came out to be 24.29 and 1.54, respectively. The mean and standard deviation for 2nd attempters/drop-outs (N=31, Percentage=40.78%) came out to be 25.96 and 1.95, respectively. The mean and standard deviation for students pursuing graduation along with preparing for competitive exams as an alternative career option (N=18, Percentage=23.68%) came out to be 26.27 and 4.29, respectively. The results show that the 3rd group of attempters have less levels of academic stress as compared to the other two groups.

Table1.4

Pearson correlation	0.705**
Level of significance	<.001
N (total number of participants)	139

Table 1.4 depicts the value of Pearson correlation to check the relationship between academic stress and binge eating. It came out to be 0.705**. The results reveal that there exists a positive correlation between academic stress and binge eating. The more one is academically stressed, the higher binge-eating levels he/she would have. The results also showed that the correlation is highly significant at 99% of confidence level. This rejects the null hypothesis H_{01} = There exists no significant relationship between academic stress and binge-eating levels of students preparing for competitive exams.
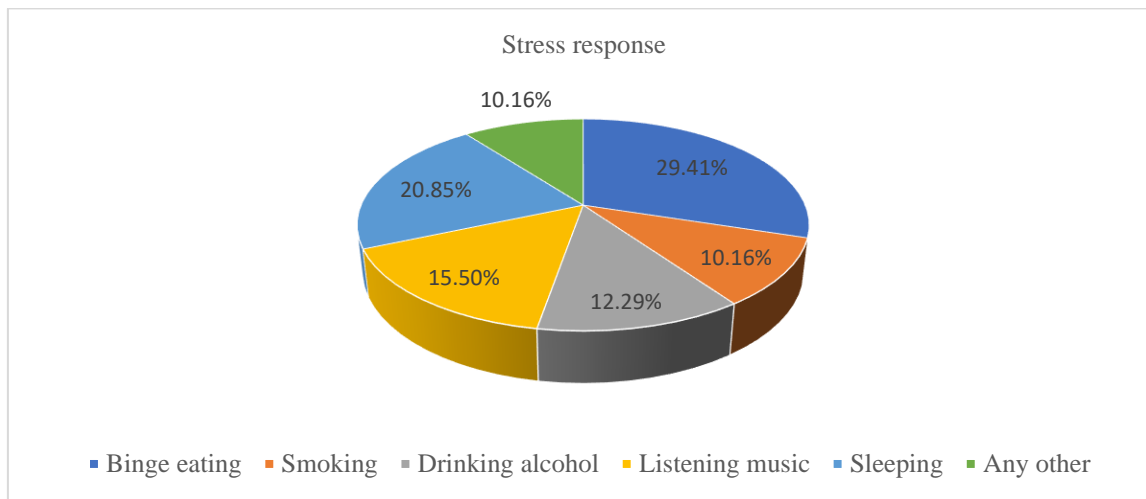
Figure 1.1

Figure 1.1 depicts a pie chart showing the responses that participants gave in response to stress. These are Binge eating (29.41%), Smoking (10.16%), Drinking Alcohol (12.29%), Listening Music (15.50%), Sleeping (20.85%), and any other (10.16%). As the results reveal that the highest response of the participants is binge eating, the results reject the null hypothesis H_{05}= Binge eating shall not be one of the most favorable responses among participants of all groups.

Table 1.5

Attempt History	N	Percentage	Mean	Standard deviation	T-value	Significance level
1st attempters	27	46.55%	24.29	1.48	-3.617	<.01
2nd attempters/ drop outs	31	53.44%	25.96	1.95		

Table 1.5 depicts the significant difference between the stress levels of 1st attempters and drop outs/ 2nd attempters by using an independent sample t-test. The results reveal that out of 58 participants with high stress levels, 2nd attempters/ drop outs have high levels of academic stress (N=31, Percentage= 53.44%, M= 25.96 and SD= 1.95) have high levels of academic stress as compared to 1st attempters (N= 27, Percentage= 46.55%, M= 24.29 and SD=1.95). The obtained T-value, that is, 3.617 exceeds the cut-off 2.660 at 0.01 as shown in the significance table. As the p<.01, t-value is highly significant at 99% confidence level. The results rejects the null hypothesis H_{02}= There exists no significant difference in academic stress of 2nd attempters (drop outs) and 1st attempters.

Table 1.6

Attempt History	N	Percentage	Mean	Standard deviation	T-value	Significance level
1st attempters	27	35.52%	24.29	1.54	50.468	<.01
Students pursuing alternative career option along with preparing for competitive exams.	18	23.68%	26.27	4.29		

Table 1.6 depicts the significant difference between the stress levels of 1st attempters and those who pursued alternate careers along with preparing for competitive exams by using independent sample t-test. The results reveal that out of 76 participants with high stress levels, 1st attempters (N=27, Percentage= 35.52%, M= 24.29 and SD= 1.54) have high levels of academic stress as compared to students who pursued alternate careers along with preparing for competitive exams (N= 18, Percentage= 23.68%, M= 26.27 and SD=4.29). The obtained T-value, that is, 50.468 exceeds the cut-off 2.660 at 0.01 as shown in the significance table. As the p<.01, t-value is highly significant at 99% confidence level. The results reject the null hypothesis i.e,

H_{03}=Significant differences shall not be found in the stress level of the students who are pursuing alternate careers along with preparing for competitive exams and 1st attempters.

Table 1.7

Attempt History	N	Percentage	Mean	Standard deviation	T-value	Significance level
2nd attempters	31	40.78%	25.96	1.95	57.071	<.01
Students pursuing alternative career option along with preparing for competitive exams.	18	23.68%	26.27	4.29		

Table 1.7depicts the significant difference between the stress levels of 2nd attempters/ drop-outs and those who pursued alternate careers along with preparing for competitive exams by using independent sample t-test. The results reveal that out of 76 participants with high stress levels, 1st attempters (N=31, Percentage= 40.78%, M= 25.96 and SD= 1.95) have high levels of academic stress as compared to students who pursued alternate careers along with preparing for competitive exams (N= 18, Percentage= 23.68%, M= 26.27 and SD=4.29). The obtained T-value, that is, 50.468 exceeds the cut-off 2.660 at 0.01 as shown in the significance table. As the $p<.01$, t-value is highly significant at 99% confidence level. The results reject the null hypothesis i.e, H_{04}=Significant differences shall not be found in the stress level of the students who are pursuing alternate careers along with preparing for competitive exams and 2nd attempters/ drop-outs.

Discussion:
The present study had thrown light upon the relationship between academic stress and binge eating among students preparing for competitive exams. **Table 1.1** revealed that 40.64% of participants have high stress levels whereas 3.74% of the participants have low stress levels. **Table 1.2** revealed that 33.68% of participants have severe binge-eating levels whereas 31.01% of participants have non-binging levels. **Table 1.3** depicts that students having alternative career options shall exhibit less stress and binge eating indulgence in comparison to 1st attempters and of 2nd attempters (drop outs). **Table 1.4** highlighted that students preparing for competitive exams exhibit positive correlation between stress and binge eating. **Table 1.5**depicts the significant difference between the stress levels of 1st attempters and drop outs/ 2nd attempters by using an independent sample t-test. There exists a significant difference in academic stress of 2nd attempters (drop outs) and 1st attempters. **Table 1.6**depicts the significant difference between the stress levels of 1st attempters and those who pursued alternate careers along with preparing for competitive exams. **Table 1.7**depicts the significant difference between the stress levels of 2nd attempters/ drop-outs and those who pursued alternate careers along with preparing for competitive exams**Figure 1.1** proved that Binge eating is the most favorable response among participants of all groups. The results of the current study had rejected all the null hypothesis in favor of alternative hypothesis.

The results of the current study are significant to previous research. A study conducted in on a sample of 162 female participants in USA revealed that women who have Binge Eating Disorder tend to experience more antecedent ife events in a period of 12-months before the onset of binge eating patterns that do both psychiatric and non-psychiatric control women with same age (Kathleen M. Pike et al., 2006). The research findings of the present study also tend to indicate that academic stress induces binge eating patterns among students preparing for competitive exams. The present study is conducted in India on both males and females.

Another study published was conducted in Korea on a sample of 400 girls aged b/w 17-18 years revealed that Bulimic Investigatory Test Edinburgh scores were positively correlated with high levels of stress, trait anxiety and depression in binge eating groups (Jin-Yi Jung et al., 2017). The results of the present study are significant as they indicate a positive correlation between academic stress and binge eating and the study is conducted in India on both males and females with 1 main dependent variable, that is, binge eating.

 A study conducted in England on 3415 students revealed that there is a high association between binge eating and rates of impulsivity and compulsivity. Binge eating Disorder is also associated with high levels of stress, depression, PTSD, anxiety and low self-esteem among females as compared to males (Jeremy E. Solly et al, 2021). The results of the current study are significant as they indicate that high will be the academic stress, higher will be binge eating levels. However, the current study didn't highlight the difference between males and females but focused more on students preparing for competitive exams. We can say that binge eating is associated with many forms of negative health outcomes and other psychiatric and non-psychiatric diseases such as stress, anxiety, alcohol abuse, trauma, depression, etc.

Conclusion:

The aim of the current study is to check how academic stress is related to binge eating among students preparing for competitive exams. Other than this, the study had thrown light upon many other important issues. There could be many responses to stress among students other than binge eating. These could be sleeping, smoking, drinking or listening to music. Ways of coping with different forms of stress are different and subjective for everyone. The study also aims to create an awareness among youth to give more priority to their health rather than academics. The youth must understand that "Health is Wealth." The study also creates awareness among youngsters to reduce such negative comfort seeking responses to stress such as binge eating, smoking, drinking, etc. rather than these activities, youngsters can engage in productive activities in response to stress such as playing with Rubik's cube or solving sudoku puzzles. Playing these games act as a stress buster and increases cognitive functioning. Close parental guidance is necessary to combat academic stress. It is the responsibility of the primary care gives or parents to inculcate health inducing or health promoting behaviors among their children. Health promoting behaviors include regular brain exercise, control over one's emotions and feelings, improvement in interpersonal relationships, proper and healthy nutritious diet and avoidance of destructive behaviors helps in combating any forms of stress.

Limitations:

1. The current study didn't reveal among males and females, who are more prone to stress and high levels of binge eating.
2. The sample size chosen is very small due to which the result of the study cannot be generalized to a larger population.
3. Results of the study are applicable to a very narrow chunk of the population.
4. The study didn't highlight the factors other than binge eating can be positively correlated to academic stress.
5. The study is only conducted on students preparing for competitive exams. The study didn't cover the entire student population.
6. The study lacks comparison on the basis of age as it didn't highlight which age group students are more prone to high academic stress and binge eating.

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